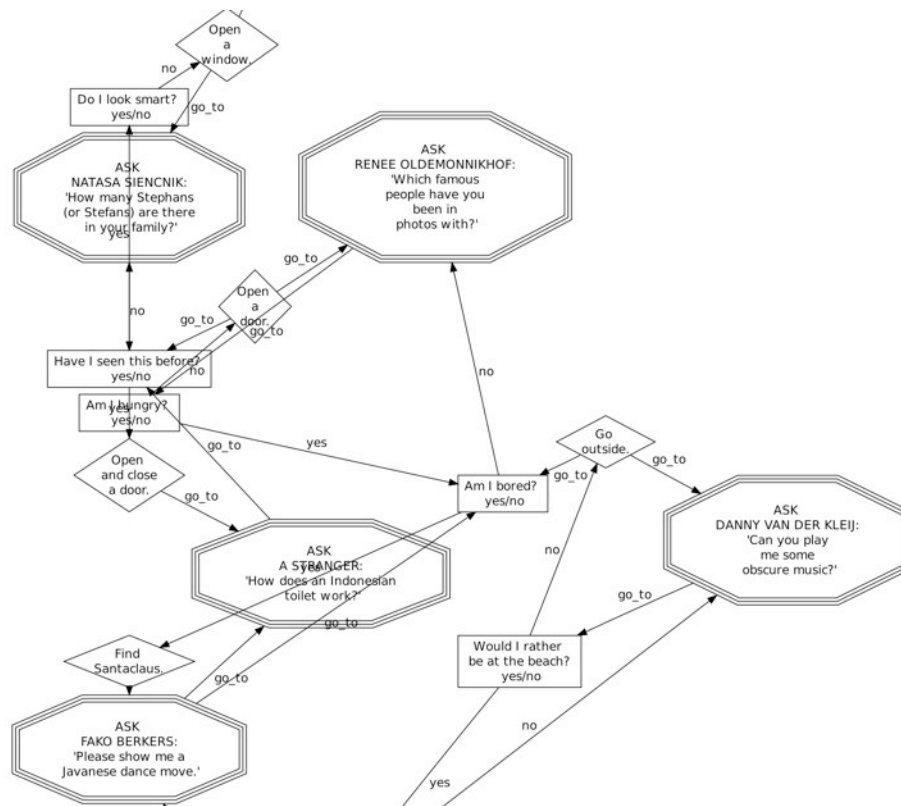


Inge Hoonte, October 23, 2011

Random Personalized Exhibition Experience v.10.5.11 (2010/2011)



This project establishes connections between people to create unexpected narratives in an exhibition experience.

Based on various algorithms, a computer script connects three separate sets of data to one another, namely Actions, Questions, and People. The connections that the program forms between these nodes are random, and differ each time I execute the program. The results, or links between nodes and how they relate to one another, are processed by a graphic visualization software (GraphViz), and saved as a PDF. The links between nodes are visualized by an arrow, and each group of nodes has its own predetermined box or shape. The file is then printed onto paper. This map forms the base for navigation of an exhibition space. The user of the map, or the player of this textual game, is the exhibition audience. The player picks a point to start, and follows the questions and actions from there to create his/her own individual experience.

An example. Let's say you start at the action 'open and close a door.' After you perform the action, an arrow on the map will lead you to the question 'Are you wearing two pairs of socks?' Answering 'no' might then take you to a person, eg 'Ask Natasa Siencnik "How many Stephans (or Stefans) are there in your family?"', and so on.

There are over 60 nodes involved, in between which over 60 links crisscross one another. Thanks to the total amount of variables, over 100 different graphic maps can be generated. This means that each copy offers a unique experience of the space the map is portraying, in which the Actions, Questions, and People present shape the architecture, not the actual physical space. Specific questions on the map direct the player to a person who's present on paper as well as in the physical space. The player in this model is subjected to a script. Albeit for the first time, they are mere agents performing a communicative routine through short interactions with strangers.

I wanted to combine the ways in which we explore space and can get to know other people, and ourselves, along the way. Because the project was presented during a live art event, I could play with offering the audience a different notion of experiencing an exhibition, as well as inserting unexpected behavior into that space. Such as people singing, being questioned, or refusing to tell strangers their full name, in short, personal details that don't always leak into spaces naturally. I also wanted to explore the boundaries between personal and public space by disseminating this type of information.

Captain Tweet (2011)

https://twitter.com/tweet_captain



Captain Tweet is a live twitter feed that I created for the HMS Weymouth, a settler ship traveling from Portsmouth, United Kingdom, to Algoa Bay in East South Africa. The twitter feed consists of entries in the travel log written in 1819/1820 by Captain Turner, the ship's captain.

On this ship, over 450 settlers including children left England to start a life in a new

country. For five months, the historical log for this ocean journey is blogged "live" via Twitter, the captain's 200-year old tweets being sent to the website in real time by an automated script. The feed includes information on the food reserves, the weather conditions, and the high number of deaths and bodies being thrown overboard, especially towards the end of the trip. All of this is presented within the generic Twitter interface. As such, early 19th century events are seemingly being written in the present, a supposedly live log of what is happening out on the sea.

As the basis for this project, I appropriated a captain's log from 1819 that's catalogued on the website theshipslist.com. With its mostly short entrees, this one in particular fits the 140 character limit of Twitter, rather than a more extensive journal. I copied all entries into a text file, and then dated and timestamped each entry. The computer program I wrote runs on a remote server from July 10, 2011, until the end of the project in November. Each minute of the day, the script runs through the remaining list of entries, and if there's a date and time that match for that exact minute, the message will automatically be posted to the captain's Twitter account..

During the exhibition "No Such Thing As Repetition," curated by Inke Arns, Captain Tweet was displayed on a computer screen. The screen was rotated 90 degrees to accommodate the long list of entries on the Twitter page. A customized Firefox plug-in was set up to disable buttons from being clicked (or navigate away from the project page), as well as to refresh the page every 15 minutes in order to display up-to-date entrees.

Overall, I was looking for a manageable, step-by-step application to practice my programming skills. I found a fitting way to connect events that happened in the past, to a medium of the present. To give this information a new life, and a new meaning, in a new context.

Dear Philip E. Agre

Dear Philip E. Agre is a correspondence project in the form of three letters to Phil Agre, a scholar and professor in information sciences. He was reported missing by his former employer UCLA in October 2009, and found and deemed safe in January 2010 by LA's Sheriff's department. He requested to be left alone, and disappeared again. A few colleagues who feared for his mental and physical health teamed up to search for him. They updated those interested through Twitter, Facebook, and a blog. Countless people expressed their concern by posting messages on the very networks he chose to abandon. After searching for him for over a year, a member of the group was able to talk to him in person in February 2011. Mr. Agre again expressed the desire to be left alone, to remain "offline."

The project mostly departs from and reflects on Phil Agre's essay *Writing and Representation*, in which he uses examples of everyday behavioral routines to illustrate the way in which computation and communication technologies affect human interaction and privacy. Seeking to understand the subject matter better, and relate it to my own practice, I write him a letter. And another one. And another one. Herein, I meticulously describe brief, fleeting encounters with people in my

daily life, and relate them to his ideas on the obsession to constantly upkeep our always present, digital relationships the way our always-on world requires. By approaching communicational, interactive activities, both improvised and routine, from a computational standpoint, I ask him if he thinks we could device a mathematical analyzation using all variables involved in my previous encounters as a hypothetical solution to figuring out how to connect and relate to people.

The more I found out about Phil Agre's disappearance and possible whereabouts, the more I became aware of the multiple layers of the project. An effort to communicate with someone who doesn't want to be reached easily turned into a process of talking to myself, through him, to gain deeper understanding of my own developing practice. Not necessarily expecting a reply, the letters took on the form of a journal to philosophize about mathematical, computational, and interactive problems, through practical examples.